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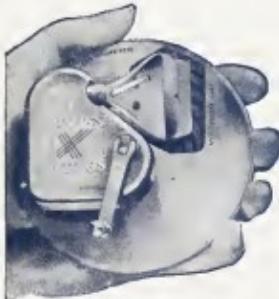
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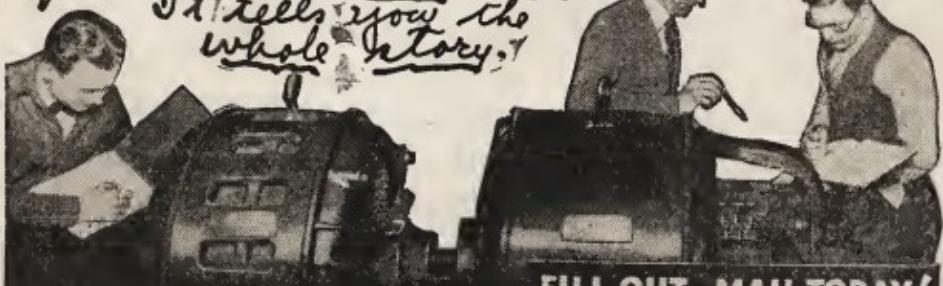
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GINGER STORIES MAGAZINE

VOL. I

No. 8

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“Oh, Well.”

TRAGEDY IN THREE MEAN ACTS.

THE WIFE.

THE HUSBAND.

THE GOB.

Act I. The Wife, the Gob, a dark bedroom.

Wife: Listen.

Gob: S'matter?

Wife: Husband.

Gob: O. L.

Wife: Go.

Gob: Where?

Wife: Ward-robe.

Gob: O. K. (Exit right.)

Act II. Enter Husband (left), undresses and gets into bed in the dark. Wife sits up.

Wife: Oo-oo.

Husband: S'matter?

Wife: Tooth-ache.

Husband: O. L.

Wife: Go.

Husband: Where?

Wife: Drug-store.

Husband: O. K. Dresses in the dark, and exit (left). Enter Gob (right).

Act III. Drug-store. Enter Husband (left).

Husband: Quick.

Clerk: S'matter?

Husband: Tooth-ache.

Clerk: Gob?

Husband: Who?

Clerk: You.

Husband: Why?

Clerk: Sailor-pants.

Husband: O. L., K. O., etc.

Curtain



Ravin'



Once upon a midnight dreary, I was lying—not so weary!
 On a mass of silken pillows heaped upon my bedroom floor.
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
 As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
 "Must be Theodore," I murmured, "Jack or Fred or Lewis Vore—
 One of them—or maybe more."

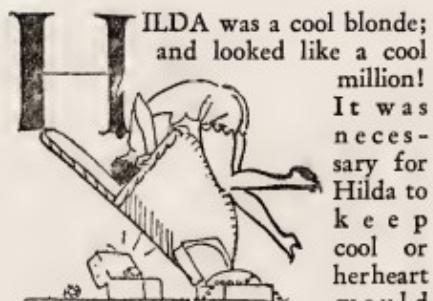
Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
 And I shivered in my nightie as I ran to ope the door.
 My young heart was beating madly and my body swaying gladly,
 So I doffed my nightie—bad me!—and I opened up the door. . . .
 In disgust, though, I retreated and from kisses I forbore.
 It was Hubby—nothing more!

—*Eve Lynn.*

Hilda Gets All Hot and Bothered!

By Eugenia Day

Jerry's Story and He Sticks to It.



HILDA was a cool blonde; and looked like a cool million! It was necessary for Hilda to keep cool or her heart would

have galloped away with her head—and you know what happens then! Hilda's good looks were not ordinary good looks. They were *ravishing!* When she focused her big violet eyes on a poor fat butter-and-egg man, he turned to putty in her hands . . . and little Hilda was some sculptress with butter-and-egg-man putty! She knew her night clubs, too . . . and she'd long before decided that it was better to like a little and live on Riverside Drive, than love a lot and live in the Bronx. That's the way she figured it, and at that, about fifty million other girls figured the same—and fifty million other girls can't be wrong!

Hilda swore when the telephone rang. She was just getting settled down for a long day-time nap, but the little French instrument on her bed table was insistent—and here it was noon—the middle of the night!

"Ye—ss"

If television were in use, she could have seen J. Mortimer Wilks (Stocks & Bonds) seated in his suite at the Biltmore in his B. V. D.'s, with a great big bouncing bottle of \$125 a case Scotch roosting before him . . . half gone.

"Did I wake up little cuddlums?" cooed J. Mortimer, innocently.

"Oh, no—" But Hilda smothered the wise-crack. After all, her little 240 pound play-mate of the night before had said something about a Mercedes roadster . . . and a square diamond—or was it that other gink that mentioned the square diamond?—oh well, what the hell—

"Hello, Hinky Dinky," said Hilda affectionately. She called him "Hinky Dinky" for no apparent reason—the name amused her.

"I can't sleep worth a damn," continued J. Mortimer, thickly—"what say we get together . . . ?"

"Whh—at?"

"I mean for lunch . . . ?"

"Oh—"

"At the Biltmore—at two—oke?"

"Oke," replied Hilda, and tried to hide the lack of enthusiasm that she felt for the date. But that Mercedes roadster—

Now, Hilda was considered "front

(turn over)



page" copy for the evening tabloid newspapers. She was pretty, and not afraid to show a little hosiery in her photographs. And there was scarcely a raid that she didn't figure in. Don't get the idea that she was mixed up in ordinary speakeasy haul-ins—oh, my no. But when the better swig and giggle joints got pinched, Hilda was usually right on hand, one foot on the bar, and three sheets in the wind. And, too, she had been named in no less than four divorce cases. Hilda was a good correspondent, even though she was a rotten letter writer!

It just happened that the following little scene was being enacted in one of the pinker tabloid offices just at the moment that Hilda was stepping into her warm tub, getting all ready to meet J. Mortimer.

The managing editor bellowed:

"Hey—"

The object of this *hey*, was a tall youngster with sandy hair, and keen

blue eyes—a cute kid and no mistake. His name was Jerry James (not Jesse) and he had just come to work for the paper—in fact, it was his first job in the wild and wicked metropolis.

"Yes, boss," answered Jerry, jumping to the chief's side.

"Go up to 25 East 57th Street—

Apartment 3-C—and call on a dame named Hilda—Hilda—(aside) Hey, Bill, what the hell's that Hilda girl's last name? . . . Oh yes, Hilda Harkness . . . (to Jerry) go up to this place and see if you can't get some sort of a story out of her—she's usually got one up her teddy—"

Jerry blushed.

"Yes, sir—any particular kind of a story?"

The boss snarled.

"Take a look at her—there's only one kind of story you can get about her—see if you can't find a pair of man's pajamas under her bed—see if —Oh, hell, go on up and see her!"

When Jerry stepped out of the taxi, he felt in his vest pocket to be sure his pencil was handy. He'd want to take notes—I'll say he would!

Just as Hilda was stepping out of the tub, her bell rang.

Being in a hurry, she pressed the buzzer and slipped into a thin negligee.

Then there was the soft purr of her own apartment bell.

"Yes . . . ?" she called, wrapping

the silk gadget around a million dollars worth of torso.

"It's Mr. James from the Evening Laughic."

"Come IN," shouted Hilda, opening the door—for if there was anything she liked better than publicity, it was twice as much.

The minute she caught sight of Jerry, her hard-boiled heart took three handsprings, a couple of nose-dives, and landed up side down.

Jerry got pale—Sufferin' Sex-Appeal—what a baby!

"I—er—I—er" stammered Jerry.

"I heard you the first time," said Hilda, smiling. "Have a shot?"

Jerry didn't know whether she was referring to a Colt or a cocktail shaker, and what's more, he didn't care a good Metropolitan damn.

"Don't care if I do," he replied grinning from ear to ear.

"That remark was my downfall," reparte Hilda, but she didn't go into details.

"My boss sent me up here for a story," began Jerry, as he drained the thin glass of straight rum . . . "know any stories?"

"Did you hear the one about the farmer's daughter?"

"I mean, for the newspaper—"

Hilda looked at Jerry again, and her heart started to skip again.

Something had to be done . . . so she went over and sat on the arm of Jerry's chair.

Jerry looked into those large

violet eyes . . . his nostrils inhaled the exotic scent from her freshly bathed body . . . he felt her lovely bare leg press against his . . . and in less time than it takes to snap a garter, he crushed her down beside him and kissed her—once . . . twice . . . three times—and SOLD!

"Oh—oh, Jerry boy—"

Jerry believed that actions spoke louder than words, so he answered her with another kiss.

Hilda jumped up.

"Oh—oh
—oh," she
w a i l e d ,
"I can't let
you do that
— I can't
f a l l i n
l o v e w i t h
y o u — I'd—
starve—"



Of course, Jerry didn't fully understand what she was raving about, but he *did* understand that if he didn't have her in his arms he'd go nutty.

So he got up and leaped toward Hilda like a tiger for his beefsteak. Hilda started on a fast trot for the bedroom. Silly girl, what made her think she'd be safe THERE? Aren't women the nuts?

In an instant Jerry was beside her—catching her up in his arms—caressing her—fondling her—kissing her—driving her cuckoo!

Together they seemed to drift into a complete haze of passion—the time, place, date and month of the year were forgotten—

they were living only in a glorious, warm, exotic land of love—

"Oh, Jerry—"

"Hilda—Hilda—Hilda—"

* * * * *

The telephone began to ring—
brrrrr-rrrrr—

"Damn!"

Brrr-rrrr-rrrrr-rrrrrr—

Finally Hilda picked up the phone, in no mood to be talking with J. Mortimer Wilks—

"Hilda," said a voice, "where in the world *are* you—it's half past—



what's that you say!"

"I say," said Hilda in a nervous voice, "I can't make it—"

"But—"

Hilda hung up quickly.

(turn to page 51)



Diary of a Ginger Bred Girl

By Eve Lynn

SUNDAY
10
MARCH

1929

Just back from a mad shopping tour and what do I find? Someone has been good to me - I wonder who -

The latest model portable and loose-leaf Diary. WELL - now I may use the HUNT and PECK system to my heart's content.

I am nearly as fagged as I was last night after I imprudently told Francois Le Chaud that I couldn't believe French lovers were all they are pushed up to be. (He certainly convinced me, though. And HOW that man can-argue!) But to return to this afternoon's hectic store-trotting, the dress I finally unearthed is nothing less than the latest reply to a young lady's plea. It's one of those awfully affectionate, clinging affairs that makes a girl grin and bare "It." Any man who could calmly look at a girl inside of a dress like that simply isn't hitting on all glands. And WHO wants a man like that!

To-morrow night is the Colossal Evening for little Eve, that being the time when I am to see Arthur Dell, the famous author of "Ten Evils of Dancing." There is to be a public dance at the Gilt Glade and He is going to be there, ostensibly in search of material for another book on dancing. And be it understood that I am always ready to assist struggling young authors-providing they are sufficiently attractive. Judging by Art's photo in this morning's paper, he isn't exactly the type one sarcastically invites over to scare the children. Of course, he has a goody-goody complex,

(turn over)

as is evidenced by his horror of modern dancing, but then—he hasn't danced with me yet!

TUESDAY

12

MARCH

1929

TWO DAYS LATER: And everything is hotsy-totsy now! In other words, Veni, Vidi, Vici, which, being freely interpreted means "I arrived, I saw him, I got him;" referring to the little Puritan novelist, of course.



The Gilt Glade should have changed its name last night to the Sardine Container—it was so packed with poor fish. In fact I was there more than an hour before I realized that the guest of honor, Arthur Dell, wasn't even on the floor, but was sitting at one end of the hall in a little, draped grandstand. He was neatly sandwiched in between two terrible femmes who seemed to be just about as welcome as a Scotchman at a gold digger's ball. Not having reckoned upon him being exiled in that manner, I WAS rather dismayed for a moment, but, after all, Napoleon was right when he said everything is fair in love and war. So I just sent one of my partners over to Art with the cryptic message that someone

who wished to see him about his new book was waiting for him in the balcony.

I watched him make formal, and, I fancied, not too reluctant adieus to his two crestfallen companions, and then he swiftly threaded his way through the maze of dancers, up the balcony steps and toward me. He would have passed me, though, had I not reached out and touched his arm.

"It was I who sent for you," I said demurely. "Don't you intend to dance to-night?"

"I-DANCE!" he repeated horrified. "Why, I never danced in my life!"

Oh, thought I, no wonder you wrote the "Ten Evils of Dancing." You know nothing at all about the ten or more thrills. I pursed my lips and tried to look very business-like.

"I'm from your publishers," I said - (we can't ALL be little George Washingtons) - "And they think that you should have more practical experience of your subject. They-ah-believe that you could write much more realistically if you danced. In fact they absolutely refuse to take your next book unless you follow their instructions. Of course," I hastened on, "they realized that you wouldn't want to dance with everybody, so they sent me."

And then I smiled my most appealing smile - the one that had taken a whole afternoon's practice before the mirror. It worked. He looked very deeply and steadily at me for a long, long moment and then, without a word, took my arm and together we descended the balcony stairs.

I obligingly instructed him in the conventional - or 's it unconventional? - method of holding a lady during a dance. He was very careful to leave plenty of space between us - at first. As we glided away, he just a trifle unsteady and unsure of the steps, he muttered: "This is - horrible!"

I looked hurt. "Other men haven't found it so - horrible." I pouted. He didn't reply, being too engrossed in a study of the floor over which we were dancing. It WAS unique, for, at intervals, it was made of heavy plate glass through which one could see little pools of sparkling water filled with gold fish. "Disgraceful!" gasped my escort, glancing down.

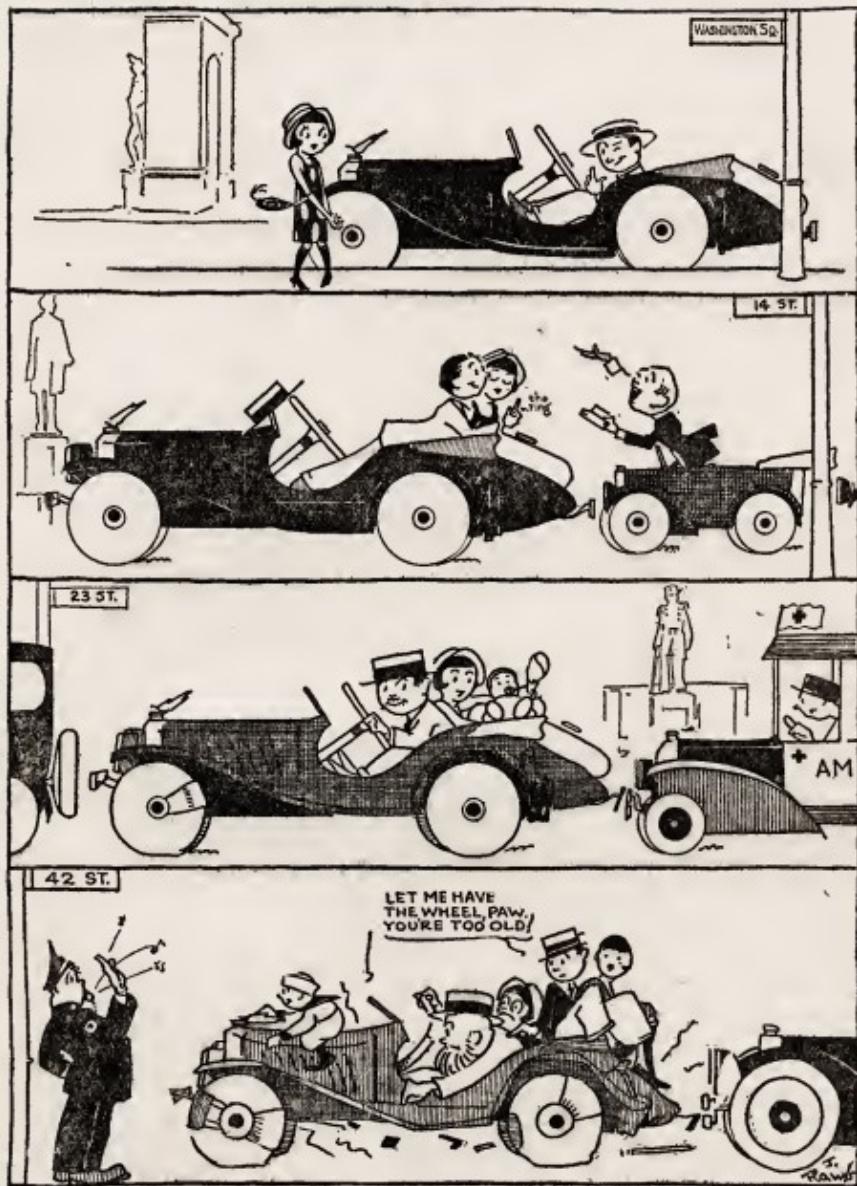
"Do you really consider it a bad influence for - the fish?" I asked innocently. He glared. And soon after that we discovered that there were a number of mirrors placed just below the glass. We hadn't seen them at first because of the crowds continually circling about them. Arthur didn't say a word, but I noticed that a very determined expression crept into his handsome face. I wondered if he contemplated tearing up the floor and ruining the demoralizing mirrors - but how I did misjudge that boy! Not ten minutes later, I suddenly realized, that, though going through all the regular motions of dancing, we still remained on the same spot. I glanced up, puzzled and what was my astonishment to find my partner's eyes riveted feverishly upon

What's in a Name?



I'll never forget you—
How could I, my dear,
When the love words you spoke
Still ring in my ear?
I'll always remember
The strength of your arms,
The million mad kisses,
Your masculine charms.
In fond recollection
On memories chain,
No, I'll not forget you—
But, what is your name?

—Edna Paul Fitzgerald



Caught in Traffic



GINGER SNAPS

Polly: "Why did Jack wear a business suit when he called to see you last night?"

Molly: "He meant business."

SHE SANG
"My Garden"
and
Got as far as the
FRUIT TREES
when
Someone Handed Her
the
RASPBERRY!



*She led a blameless life below,
Death held for her no terrors,
And now she's gone where lilies
grow—
No Runs, No Hits, No Errors!*



"Where do all the good little girls go?"

"To Heaven."

"Where do all the bad little girls go?"

"Down to the station to see the traveling men."



"If you know her real intimately,
she isn't a bad girl."

"Then what's the use of knowing
her intimately?"

He: "I'm tired out."

She: "Why don't you pay me a visit for your weak end?"

NO DOUBT
IN THE FUTURE
They Will Sing
"WHAT HAS BECOME
of that
OLD PASSIONED GIRL
of
MINE?"

THE FAVOR

By Arthur Styron

"COME on, Bill, lend us your Nest," pleaded Jim.

"Don't be a damned fool, Jim," said Bill. "A Nest has to be strictly private, secret, or the chickens are shy of it—see?"

"But, Bill, just for this once! You know I'm an old friend —"

"All the more reason we shouldn't get our love affairs mixed and spoil everything. Get a Nest of your own."

"I will—later. But I need one today—urgently."

"Why don't you go to a hotel?" asked Bill.

"The er-lady refuses. You see, she is a widow, and has a position to maintain, so she is most discreet. I've had an awful time bringing her to the point of—er—granting an interview, and only last night she consented. And even then it was only on the condition that we meet in an apartment where no one lived, secluded and strictly private, and rented under an assumed name."

"In other words—a Nest."

"Yes. And now that you understand, I'm sure you'll do me this little favor, old boy —"

"I will *not*," said Bill firmly.

The two men were seated in the lounge of the Metropole Club, smoking long cigars and sipping longer aperitifs. They were both of the same type—tall, slender, well-dressed men-about-town, with smooth-shaved faces and dark, sleek hair. Both were about thirty, although Jim, with his merry eyes and humorous mouth, at times seemed much younger.

Jim gave vent to a deep sigh at his friend's obstinacy, and ordered another aperitif. "I don't understand you at all, Bill," he said sadly. "Even if you won't do me this little favor, you might do it for Inez —"

"Inez?" exclaimed Bill, sitting up suddenly. "Is that who it is —?"

"Sure. Didn't you know all the time?"

"I suspected," said Bill slowly. A



dark color was beginning to stain his face.

"Well, there's no use pretending. You've known all the time I was after her."

"You are lucky," said Bill dryly. "She is a beautiful woman."

"She's luscious," added Jim enthusiastically. "You used to like her pretty well yourself, and so I thought you'd be willing to do her this little favor —"

"You are clever, Jim!"

"Or, maybe that's why you refuse! Because you liked her —"

"What?"

"You won't lend us the Nest because you're jealous!"

"Don't be an ass, Jim. I refused before I ever knew who you were meeting."

"And now that you know you won't refuse any longer?"

Bill looked at his friend for a few moments in silence, while a heavy frown gathered between his brows. Certainly Jim was not a heavyweight

mentally; he delivered his k.o.'s to the many women who adored him in other ways.

"No, Jim," he said slowly, "I won't refuse any longer."

"That's the lad," said Jim, gratefully reaching for his friend's hand and shaking it warmly. "Have you got the key?"

"Wait a minute," said Bill. "If you take the Nest, you will have to keep it. I won't be able to use it again."

"Glad to," said Jim. "I've needed one a long time."

"I'll write you a transfer," said Bill. He took a notebook from his pocket and scribbled something with his fountain pen. Tearing the sheet out he handed it to his friend with two keys. "Don't go together," he advised.

"Don't you think I've got any brains?" asked Jim gaily, receiving the articles and dropping them into his pocket.



"Not many," thought Bill; but he said, "It's not a question of brains, but of instincts."

"Have another drink?" Jim invited.

"No thanks. I have to write some letters."

"Well, so long. Thanks a thousand times for the—transfer. I'll send you a check."

"Not at all, old man. I'm glad to let you have it. Good luck." Bill wended his way to the writing-room where he actually did write a letter to a "Miss Daisy Smith," urging her to meet him at the usual place that afternoon.

* * * *

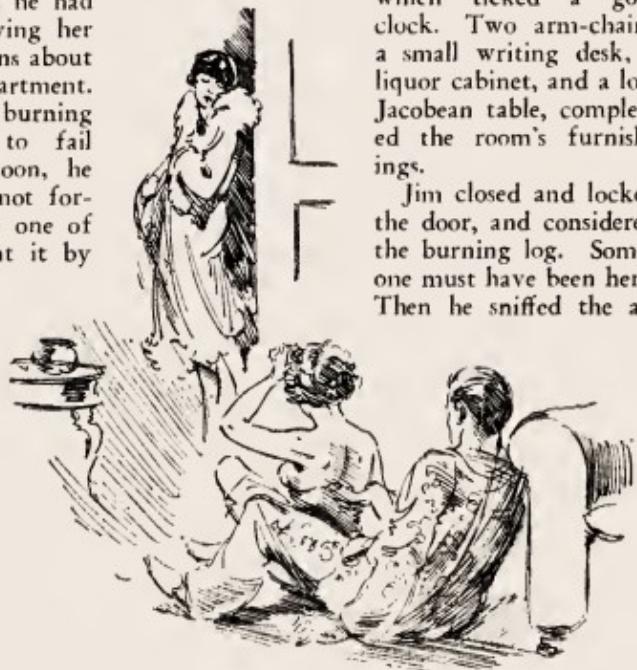
As soon as he was alone, Jim, too, grew very busy. There was first of all a letter to be written to Inez, telling her about the wonderful rendezvous he had arranged, and giving her detailed instructions about finding the apartment. After adding a burning exhortation not to fail him that afternoon, he sealed the letter, not forgetting to enclose one of the keys, and sent it by special messenger to the beautiful widow.

Instead of lunch he had a swim and rub-down at the club, followed by several high-balls; after which he procured a taxi and made his way to the Nest. It was still early, but he was im-

patient to get things in readiness for his loved-one's arrival.

The Nest was an apartment in one of those small, discreet hotels, where one encounters only an elevator-boy with affected blindness. Jim fitted his key in the lock with a feeling of bland satisfaction which was enhanced as he entered the room. Bill certainly had exquisite taste for such things. The floor was completely covered by a black Persian carpet, very thick and silky, and the walls were tinted a delicate pink. A French couch-bed, very low and wide, curtained with apple-green silk draperies reaching to the ceiling, occupied one side of the room, forming the *motif*, so to speak, of the apartment. Opposite, a small open fireplace in which a gas-log burned brightly, was surmounted by a Parian marble mantel, upon which ticked a gold clock. Two arm-chairs, a small writing desk, a liquor cabinet, and a low Jacobean table, completed the room's furnishings.

Jim closed and locked the door, and considered the burning log. Someone must have been here. Then he sniffed the air



critically. Jasmin. Inez! She had beat him to it! The sweet thing had been as impatient as he!

The sound of splashing water came to him from the bathroom. The next instant he heard a voice calling, subdued and muffled, through the thick door.

"Is that you, darling?"

"Yes!" he cried jubilantly.

"Get ready. I'll be out in a minute," said the voice.

Jim noticed for the first time a pair of pyjamas laid out on the bed—pyjamas of delicate silk, tan, splotched with crimson. He quickly stripped and donned his "uniform."

"I'm all ready," he called to the bathroom door.

"In a minute," said the voice.

Jim decided to pass the time by doing some exercises to strengthen the back. He was so engrossed in this that he did not hear the bathroom door softly open, nor the soft flurry of silk as someone crept across the room; and so he was taken completely by surprise when a soft, warm body leapt upon his back as he leaned over to touch the floor, and a pair of small hands clutched at his thick hair as if it were reins.

Certainly, he thought quickly, Inez had thawed more completely than he had ever anticipated!

"Giddap!" said a fresh, young voice. Jim rose upright, the girl still clinging to his back, and trotted off to the bathroom. There, in front of a large pier-glass, they regarded each other. For a moment both of them were too stunned to speak. The face that he saw peeping over his shoulder was not that of Inez at all, but of a vivacious, striking blonde. The face that she saw above her encircling arms was not that of Bill, but of a younger man who resembled

Bill in every feature except his eyes and mouth.

She was the first to recover. "Put me down," she commanded haughtily.

Jim released her thighs which he had been holding in place astride his back, and allowed her to slip to the floor. "I hope you enjoyed your ride," he observed politely.

"Don't try to be funny," said the young woman with as much dignity as could be expected of a lady wearing only a brief pair of step-ins. "Just tell me what you are doing here."

"Playing horsey," answered Jim..

The young woman stamped her foot on the tile floor, but the gesture was not effective as her foot was bare.

"Tell me!" she ordered.

"All right," said Jim. "But don't you think it's rather cold in here? Suppose we go out by the fire."

"Very well," she said.

He gravely offered her his arm which she accepted, and they marched into the bedroom. Jim pulled the two arm-chairs close to the blazing log, and they sat down. He gallantly removed the coat of his pyjamas and draped it about her bare shoulders.

"Well?" she said, regarding her toes, which she wriggled before the blaze.

"My name is Jim. What is yours?"

"Daisy."

"Daisies don't tell," he quoted.

"Then let Jim do it," she said significantly.

"All right, Daisy. This is the explanation: This is my apartment."

"It is not."

"It is. I rented it just today from a friend of mine named Bill, whom



I suppose you know."

"Today?" she seemed bewildered. "Why, he wrote me to meet him here today."

"Then he must have done it before he transferred the apartment to me. As a matter of fact, he did seem a little loath to let me have it—for some reason."

"I don't believe you at all," she announced.

"I can prove it." He rose and rummaged among his clothes lying in a heap on the low table, finally extracting a piece of paper from one of the pockets. Daisy watched him, fascinated by the wide shoulders and strong back upon which she had lately jogged.

"Perhaps you'd better put on those clothes," she observed icily.

"Before you?" he asked reproachfully. "I wouldn't be so immodest. Besides, I'm too hot."

"You were cold a minute ago."

"That's the way with me," he said. "Hot and then cold, or vice versa. . . . Now for the proof." He handed her

the paper Bill had given him, and resumed his seat.

Daisy read and gave a little exclamation. "It says that for one thousand dollars he transfers the apartment and *everything it contains to you*," she cried.

Jim nodded. "So it does."

"The beast!" she stormed. "He meant to include me. He is *selling me!*"

"I haven't paid him yet," Jim consoled her.

"Then you mustn't," she cried. "I couldn't bear to be paid for."

"I won't pay him," said Jim firmly.

Daisy began to blubber a little, using the pyjama coat for a handkerchief. Jim, overcome with sympathy, knelt on the rug at her feet and put his arms around her waist. He raised his face, and his merry eyes looked deep into hers.

"You are a good friend," she sighed.

"You must not rate my friendship too highly," he told her.

Their lips met in a deep, burning kiss.

"I never did give a damn about Bill anyhow," she said tenderly, and sneezed.

"You are taking cold, darling," murmured Jim. "You must lie down on the couch and cover up. Want me to ride you over there?"

"Yes," she replied gratefully.

Jim got down on all fours and Daisy mounted upon his back. He was trotting gracefully over the carpet when the door softly opened and a woman appeared on the threshold. She was a dark, exotic creature, exquisitely cloaked in rose Kashmir trimmed with ermine.

Horse and rider collapsed in the middle of the room. "Inez!" stammered Jim.

The gorgeous brunette looked them over haughtily, and some of the deep bloom of her cheeks faded. Then,

"Too bad I came a little early," she said, in a crisp, icy tone; and without another word turned into the hall, slamming the door behind her.

"What shall we do?" mumbled Jim.

"Finish our ride," answered Daisy practically, digging her hands into his thick, dark hair.

* * * *

Inez was seething with rage when she reached the street. Bill, who had been spying from a doorway oppo-

site, thought it best not to speak to her until she had walked several blocks. Then, as if it were a casual encounter, he addressed her.

"Inez! What are you doing here?"

"Oh—hello. I was paying a little visit to a friend."

"I hope it's already paid," he ventured.

"Why?"

"I was going to invite you to come over to my apartment for a cup of tea. I've just taken a new place—today."

"Really?"

"And I do so much need your advice. A man is lost without a woman's help."

"Bill, don't be absurd. I know what a gay bachelor you are."

"Not for three years, Inez."

Her large, dark eyes grew suddenly warm. "Just the time I've been . . . a widow."

"I get very lonely, Inez."

"So do I, Bill," she sighed, slipping her arm confidingly through his.

Bill was elated. Already he had forgotten the long months he had gazed so greedily upon her dark loveliness when he had thought she was destined only for Jim.

After all Jim had done him a great favor by taking the old apartment—and Daisy—off his hands.

The past was finished. It would be wonderful to turn over a new leaf.

Thus thinking, he drew her down a side street towards his new Nest.



Divorced Newlyweds

By Lolita Ann Westman

(Part I Appeared in the May Issue)

PART II

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE:

(Alva Monroe married Russell Monroe for his money, and finding herself too much of a coward to enter into the spirit of wedlock, tells her husband the whole story. He agrees to let the marriage stand on her own terms, but she thinks it better that he allow her to go out of his life. "Rus" as she calls him, agrees, promises to make a generous settlement—and leaves her on their wedding night.

After he had gone, Alva couldn't sleep, but twisted restlessly in her bed until toward morning. "She must have been dozing off when something brought her to attention. She didn't know for a minute, just what it was. She lay rigid, her every faculty alert, waitin'. What was it? Not the door knob! . . . Yes, someone fumbling with the door knob! Oh, why hadn't she thought to lock the door? Who could it be?"

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY:

THE knob turned—
A man entered—

"Rus!" she whispered.
He was looking at her peculiarly.
"Hello," he said amiably.

She pulled the covers up under her chin in a mid-victorian gesture of modesty.

"Well, what is it? What do you want?" she de-



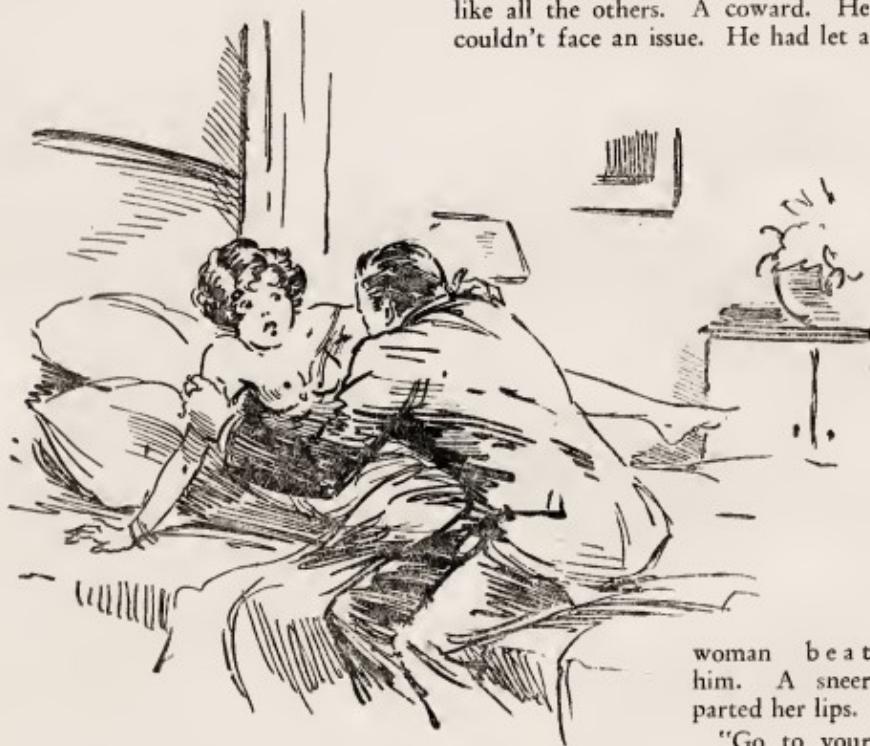
(turn over)

manded imperiously.

The answer came thickly, in a voice she scarcely recognized. "You."

She watched him close the door and cross the room to the foot of the bed; watched him, fascinated. Was this really Rus Monroe or a twin brother, physically alike but subtly different? He was grinning down at her one-sidedly.

She scrutinized him through narrowed eyes. It was quite evident now. He had been drinking heavily and he was as unlike the Rus Monroe she knew, as the same man could be. Somehow, looking at his bleary eyes, his slightly loose lips, the way he staggered around the bed, she felt as though she were ill. Rus Monroe! The impeccable Rus! So—he was like all the others. A coward. He couldn't face an issue. He had let a



woman beat
him. A sneer
parted her lips.

"Go to your
room, Rus," she
ordered slowly. "I'll see you in the
morning."

"I hope so," he answered. But he sat down on the edge of the bed. "You *are* beautiful," he went on after a minute. "No wonder I couldn't get you out of my mind. You're the kind who send men to hell."

"Not a real man, Rus," she corrected scornfully. "Only a weakling."

"Surprised to see me?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, defiantly, though she didn't know why.

"You didn't imagine I'd let you get away with your usual stuff, did you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, you have quite a reputation, my dear, for bending men to your will. You'd like to have added me to the list, wouldn't you?"

He laughed shortly. "Nothing you can say will make any difference to me tonight. Oh, you'll get your divorce all right; you'll get your alimony. But—tonight is mine." He caught her fingers and disengaged them from the sheet. "You're my wife for tonight."

"Rus!" she exclaimed, and managed to elude his grip, gaining the floor on the other side of the bed. "Rus!" she said again. "You don't know what you're doing. You don't want me. And I don't want you. Please go to your room."

His head was lowered but his eyes held hers; his feet were planted far apart as though he meant to charge.

"You're my wife," he repeated.

"All the more reason why you should treat me with respect," she replied, sparring for time while she calculated the distance to the door.

But reading her intention in her wild gaze, he reached the door ahead of her and locked it.

"Quite in the approved melodramatic style!" he said with a mocking bow.

She stood close to him, panting, raging.

"You're despicable!"

"Not at all. Merely within my rights."

"If you are a gentleman you will go."

"This is my honeymoon. It is hardly proper to spend it alone."

"I hate you!"

"And I love you."

"Love!" She tossed her head. "You call this love?"

And suddenly he reached out for her but she darted away toward the balcony. Her heart was pounding furiously. She was deathly afraid of this man who had turned the tables upon her. If she could only reach the balcony!

But she didn't. He caught a flowing piece of drapery and though it tore in his grasp he succeeded in digging his fingers into the flesh of her arms.

"Rus!" she cried in fierce panic, "in time I may learn to—to care for you—but if you force me—I swear to God I'll hate you all my life!"

"I won't be the first man you've hated—for the same reason."

"No! No! That isn't true! You are the first—you are!"

"Kiss me!"

"No!"

"I want you, you little devil! You're mine and I'm going to have you!"

His! His! Yes, she was his! She had sold herself into his keeping. No matter what he did to her, she deserved it. She had sold herself to the highest bidder.

And suddenly, as his lips found hers and pressed hard against them, the world was blotted out in a sordid gust of passion that gradually attained the heights of sublimity.

All night and well into the morning Alva lay on the bed in a strange magic spell, neither sleeping nor waking. Curious, half-formed thoughts floated, like thistledown, across her mental vision. Rus, lying beside her, sleeping heavily; drugged with liquor. She had done that to him. Yet, she had something to forgive him now. What a difference it made! No longer the man who could preach to her; but one akin, on her own level. A human being, even as she was. Someone to be taken care of.

She couldn't have told the exact moment when she opened her eyes to find them filled with Rus' figure moving about the room. She didn't stir. She watched him as he adjusted his tie before the mirror and put on his coat. She saw him go to the desk



—quietly, stealthily, so as not to wake her; saw him sit down, write something on the mauve paper, leave it propped up against a perfume bottle on the dressing table, then, without a glance toward the bed, go swiftly toward the door.

Her voice arrested him in the act of opening it. A languid voice that gave no hint of the tightening of her throat, the beating of her heart.

"Rus!"

He whirled as though he had been shot and his black eyes bore into hers. She saw that he looked drawn, tired, older.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

It seemed ages to Alva before he answered, "I don't know."

It was her turn to give orders. "Come here."

And she liked the way he obeyed.

"Sit down," was her further direction.

Again he obeyed, seeming to lack the volition to resist. But, when he had met her fearless gaze, he bowed

his head on her hand with a groan.

"God! I've been a cad; a brute."

Her fingers strayed over his hair, lightly.

"Suppose—suppose," she said softly, "I—I liked it."

Slowly, dazed, he raised his head. He couldn't seem to understand.

"I'll go away. You'll never see me again," he told her disjointedly. "I can't apologize for what I've done. There is no excuse."

"There's every excuse for a man to insist upon a honeymoon."

"I deserve your sarcasm. Of course you hate me."

"Why—of course?"

"No woman loves a brute."

"It's a funny thing, but most of us do." Because he stared at her stupidly, she burst out with sudden exasperation, "Oh, Rus, don't you understand? You've awakened me. You've made me look past your money, past your position. You've made me forget them. I've been blinded by the dollar sign, Rus. All

“TWO A. M.”

by Peggy Gaddis

PART II

(Part I appeared in the May issue)

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

A semi-tropic storm causes Judith Fleming, a beautiful mystery-girl, to break her journey from New York to Palm Beach by spending the night in a beautiful resort hotel on the edge of a lake—the Villa Rosa. Jerry Ransome, who owns the hotel, is attracted to Judith, and is puzzled when she reveals an almost frantic fear of another guest, Martin Webb. Judith and Jerry sit up several hours on the storm-swept hotel veranda, and a keen attraction springs up between them.

That night, Jerry finds Martin trying to gain access to Judith's room, and sends him on his way, though Martin insists that he has a right there. At two A.M., Judith comes to Jerry's room, and gives herself to him, with every manifestation of desire and response, much to Jerry's amazed delight.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY



NON THE morning when Jerry awoke he was alone. His eyes deepened to an almost worshipful tenderness as he realized that her shyness had made her slip away from him in the night, unable to face his adoring eyes in the gray dawn.

It was still quite early. The storm had increased, and the sky was gray, the rain descending in torrents, driving against the side of the hotel as though in an insensate fury. The wind had increased, and the orange trees bent their heads before its fury. The palm trees bent and swayed, the wind rattling their feathery tops with a dry, rattling sound.

When he went down into the lobby, he found that only such of

the servants as were quartered in the rooms over the kitchen were on duty, and he immediately plunged into the task of helping them, getting the lobby to rights, seeing that preparations for breakfast were made. And all the time, his eyes were on the stairs, waiting, hoping, eager for his first sight of Judith.

She came down at last—a slender, lovely vision in a morning frock of jonquil-yellow crepe. She held her lovely head high, and when he started forward to greet her, she hesitated an imperceptible moment, then, with a warm tide of crimson creeping up and over her face, she averted her eyes, and brushed by him, without a word!

Jerry stood stock-still for a moment, staring after her, dumbfounded. Could it be possible that she was treating him like this—after spending the night in his arms, held close, returning his caresses? She had come to him of her own free will, with no persuasion or pleading from him. Almost thrusting herself upon him—although goodness knows, he had been pleased to death therewith. But it was just a little thick that she should ignore him like this! After giving herself to him as she had!

He was angry at her actions, and he stared after her his fists clenched a little, and his jaw set hard. A low laugh behind him brought him right about face, and he looked into the cold, amused eyes of Martin Webb.

(turn over)



Obviously, Webb had witnessed the little scene, and had been much amused.

"You see, you didn't make such a tremendous hit with the little lady after all, young fellow!" sneered Martin. "Few girls like to have their parties spoiled — anybody but a sap would have known that I would not have gone to her room last night without an invitation from her!"

In the sober gray light of the stormy morning, Jerry hesitated a moment, wondering. After all — was she that type of woman? What reason had he to doubt it? Hadn't she come to his room, offered herself to him? What reason had he to doubt that she had asked *Martin Webb* to her room? And in the little moment while he puzzled, shaken no doubt, Webb passed on into the dining-room, and Jerry saw him seat himself at the girl's table.

He waited, to see if she would show that the presence of Webb at her table was distasteful. But when Jud-

ith merely looked up at him and went calmly on with her breakfast, Jerry's heart sank in his breast; he turned back to the desk, grimly certain that he had made several different kinds of a fool of himself by interfering last night.

A little later, Judith came out into the lobby, glanced indifferently toward him, and mounted the stairs in the direction of her own room. About twenty minutes later Webb left the dining-room and, with a significant glance in Jerry's direction, also mounted the stairs.

Jerry tried hard to go on with his work, but after a little, he turned the desk over to his assistant. Before he could leave the lobby, however, a testy old gentleman came up to him.

"See here, Ransome — what sort of hotel is this, anyway? I've stopped here every winter for ten years — and it's the first time I've ever seen, or heard anything — er — off-color! But if this infernal noise goes on, I'm

moving to another hotel, storm or no storm!" he snapped.

"You mean the storm, sir? Is that the noise——" began Jerry, but the old gentleman cut in.

"I do *not!* I mean the young woman who has the room next to mine! She kept me awake most of the night crying—and then two men almost fought over her in the hall, and it was two A. M. before the dratted place settled down to quiet! I meant to sleep this morning—I simply *must* have twelve hours sleep or I'm so nervous I can't endure existence! And now she has a man up in her room and they're quarrelling and fighting like the cats of Kilkenny! I insist that something be done about it!" snapped the old man testily.

"Don't worry, sir—something will!" said Jerry grimly, and went up the stairs two steps at a time.

He hastened down the corridor toward Judith's room, but before reaching it, he heard voices. Not loud enough for him to distinguish the words, but loud enough for him

to realize that two people were quarrelling.

He paused at the door, listening for a moment, and heard Webb's voice, thick with an almost murderous fury, say:

"If I thought that was the truth—I'd—wring your neck, if I knew I'd swing for it!"

And then Judith's voice, grim, hard.

"You may be quite sure that it is the truth—or I wouldn't have told you!"

Without waiting to hear more, Jerry knocked at the door—there was a little pause—and then Judith's voice, quite clearly saying, "Come in." He heard Webb's protesting murmur, did Jerry, even as he pushed open the door. But it was Judith at whom Jerry looked.

"I'm sorry, Miss Fleming—but this is against the rules of the hotel—a man in your room, with the door closed! Also—the other guests are complaining of your quarrel!" he told her, courteous but cold.

"Please come in, and close the door,



Jerry!" said Judith quietly. "I was going to telephone the desk and ask you to come up!"

Jerry hesitated a moment, but something of dumb pleading in Judith's eyes impelled him to obey her, and he entered the room, closing the door behind him, waiting.

"Mr. Webb does not believe that I—spent the night in your room—at least, that part of it from Two A. M. until dawn!" said Judith quite clearly. "Will you please convince him that I did?"

Jerry stared at her, dumbfounded! And Martin Webb turned eyes that were filled with an almost murderous hatred upon him.

"Is she telling the truth?" he grated, after a moment.

"She is!" said Jerry simply. "She came to my room directly after you went to your own."

"And—stayed?" demanded Webb through clenched teeth, his face going gray-white, his fists knotted, until the knuckles showed white with the strain.

"And stayed!" said Jerry firmly.

"Why, damn you—" howled Webb, and flung himself at Jerry. But Jerry was ready for him; as the two men clenched, Judith screamed and cowered back. Webb was trembling with rage, but Jerry was more than a match for him, even with the added strength that Webb's rage gave him. They fought like mad men—some of the other guests and hotel help rushed upon the scene and separated them.

"You win this time, damn you!" said Webb panting, held firmly by two of the male guests. "But I'll get you yet, if it takes me a life time! And that goes for you, too, you little—" he barked at the girl, hurling an unprintable name into her face, as the guests exchanged significant glances.

They carried Webb away to his room, and the hotel physician treated his bruises. Jerry waited until Judith's room was cleared of all save himself and Judith. And then he spoke, gently.

"I'm—sorry to have precipitated such a row in your room!"

She lifted her slim shoulders in a little weary shrug.

"What difference does it make? And anyway, it wasn't your fault!" she assured him wearily.

"See here, Judith—I feel I am entitled to some sort of explanation! Why did you—come to me as you did last night?" burst from Jerry, almost without his volition.

She faced him squarely.

"Partly—because I wanted to! You attracted me. You were the first man who ever—thrilled me—that sounds trite and hackneyed—but—it's quite true!" she told him quietly. "The other reason was that—I was afraid of—Webb!"

Jerry held himself in leash, though his pulses were throbbing at the thought that she had come to him because she had felt a desire for him. There was more that he had to know.

"Why were you afraid of him, Judith? Had you ever seen him before?" he persisted.

"Oh, yes—I've known him for—two years!" she returned.

Jerry's heart sank a little but he went on, grimly.

"Judith—I've got to know—so that I can decide what is to become of—you and me!" he told her. "What—is Martin Webb to you?"

She looked up, and suddenly her eyes were old and tired—beaten and unhappy.

"He is—my husband!" she said, very low.

Jerry stood still while the ground rocked beneath his feet, and the world of his rainbow-hued air castles

GUARD DUTY



MISS FORTUNE



(Continued from page 32)

crashed in ruins about him.

"Your—husband?" he repeated as though he could not force himself to a realization of what that meant.

"Yes," said Judith wearily. "My—husband! And—I hate him! I'd rather have—a rattlesnake coiling about me, than his arms! I'd rather die—than be to him—what I have been to you!"

Jerry looked a little startled. "Then you have never been—his wife in anything but name?"

She shook her head and her face twisted with a little sick frown of repulsion at the thought. "No!" she gasped, shivering a little. "No, no—and I won't be! I won't be! I'll—kill myself first!"

Jerry went to her and took her in his arms, holding her close, drawing her down beside him on the little cretonne covered love-seat, beneath the storm-lashed windows.

"Tell me about it, darling!" he said gently. "Of course you know that I love you and that I want you to marry me! Perhaps there is a way out!"

She shook her head wearily, but gave herself to the embrace of his arms with the sweet relaxation that thrilled him and made his arms tighten about her, with delight.

"There isn't anything to tell!" she said wearily. "I was in school abroad—a 'finishing' year. Dad came to me, told me that he was ruined, and begged me to marry Martin, so that Martin would lend Dad a lot of money with which to build back his fortune. Dad was so—pitiful. I couldn't refuse him! And—I thought Martin was—rather nice. I had known so few men! So—we were married the day that Dad and I arrived in New York. And—Dad died in a motor accident less than an hour after our wedding!"

She broke into sobs, and for a mo-

ment clung to him, collapsing in her grief and the vividness of her memories. But after a moment, she regained her shattered self-control and forced herself to go on.

"I—had made a bargain with Martin—and—I meant to keep it! But—I didn't love him—and—he was—brutal—! He—doesn't love me—he never did! He just—wanted to—me—because I was 'innocent' and 'untouched'—ugh! He—he frightened me so—that—I ran away from him! I started to Palm Beach to some friends who would help me—and the storm caught me here!"

She paused for a long moment, and when at last she looked up at Jerry, her face was suffused with a glorious color, and her eyes would not meet his.

"You—were so nice to me! I—I liked you at once! And—I thought that if—I could convince Martin that I wasn't—'untouched'—he wouldn't want me—would be willing to—divorce me! And—I could—give myself to you because—I liked you—and you were—so gentle and—and sweet to me!" she stammered.

His arms about her were very gentle, and his eyes were tender as they looked down into hers. How sweet she was! How adorable! His veins ran fire at the thought of her as she had been last night, soft and fragrant and warm in his arms, giving him back his kisses, with a shy abandon that had whipped his senses to ecstasy!

"And—he won't?" he asked, after a moment.

Judith shook her head, and sighed.

"That's why I told him, this morning! I thought he'd go away and leave me in peace—with you. But he said he wanted me more than ever now—because I had showed grit—and that the only change in his plans would be that he would not need to



be—quite so—gentle with me!" she stammered and clung to him, sobbing. . . .

THERE was a gentle knock at the door, and Jerry put her from him, as he went to open it. The house physician, Dr. Sturgis, stood there and, seeing over Jerry's shoulder the girl who sat huddled, weeping, on the love-seat, he motioned Jerry outside the door.

"Bad news, Jerry—ugly news!" said Dr. Sturgis grimly. "The chap you fought—this Webb, they say he is—is—dead!"

Jerry caught his breath on a little startled gasp.

"Dead!" he repeated, incredulous. "Dead!" nodded Dr. Sturgis. "I'd say the cause was acute alcoholism, and a body burned out by dissipation! His heart was like a worn-out sponge! Couldn't stand any excitement—went out like a lamp!"

"Then—would you say that I was guilty of — murder?" stammered Jerry in horror.

"Heavens, no, boy!" snapped Dr. Sturgis strongly. "Your struggle

with him wasn't rough enough for that! Webb was about forty, and had lived at a pace that burned the candle at both ends! You needn't feel any responsibility, lad. Climbing too many stairs—running for a train—an extra glass of liquor—any one of them would have been enough to have finished him!"

He hesitated a moment, looking at Jerry oddly.

"From what I hear, he was pretty much interested in the young lady there—" he began cautiously.

"In strictest confidence, Dr. Sturgis—she was his wife!" said Jerry.

"Oh!" said Dr. Sturgis, non-committally. "Then I'll leave you to break the news to her! I'll attend to everything else!"

Jerry stood looking after the doctor as that individual went briskly down the hall. Then Jerry turned and opened the door—that door which led him out of the darkness and the shadows into the land of Dreams-Come-True, where Judith would tread with him, and in which they would live in happiness—together.

DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE ‘AYES’



The Wanton Woman

By Shane O'Houlihan

PART II

(Part I Appeared in May Issue)

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE:

Gene Stoddard is seated at Toni Valducci's "Red Dance," a dive. He sees Joan Havelock, a beautiful girl enter and take her place at one of the tables. After a short time, she draws a revolver from her handbag and turning it in the direction of her own body, is about to pull the trigger, when Gene intercepts her. Leading her from the place, Gene takes Joan in his car and after a few questions, proposes, is accepted, and the two become man and wife an hour later.

It is not a great while before Gene is aware that other men have been calling at the house to see Joan during his absence, and that his wife pays visits at other apartments.

On one occasion, he enters his wife's room but a short time after he has noticed a strange man leaving the house. Seeing her unadorned, his suspicions are naturally aroused—he questions her with no result. A while later he found her, dressed, and with a letter in her hand. When he demanded to see the letter, she tore it in shreds and threw the remains in the fireplace. Stoddard rescued one small corner and while Joan stood by with blazing eyes, he read the fragment: ". . . must not come to the house . . . my husband . . . I'll meet . . ." The rest was gone.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY:

GENE STODDARD stood there with that fragment of letter in his hand, that fragment which seemed to tell so much, and yet told so little of what he really wanted to know.

His wife stood at the far corner of the room, tears welling in her eyes. She was the picture of wronged and innocent beauty, but he could not see

her beauty nor her tears through the red haze of anger that enveloped him.

He found his lips framing audibly an unspeakable name, a name which was meant for her. "They were right about you," he cried. They'd all said they wished he hadn't picked a woman from the gutter of "The Red Dance." Well, they had been right. She had turned out worse than he would have thought.

"I'm through with you," he told her. "I'm taking rooms at the club. You can stay on here as long as you care to. As long as you—have the nerve. I ask one thing. It would be me to call them 'affairs,' but whatever they are please don't carry them on in this house. . . . But I gather that the purpose of this letter was to make some sort of arrangements."

"Gene! Gene, you're crazy with jealousy. You don't know what you're saying."

"*Jealousy!* Is a man jealous because his lady of the evening has had another, the night before? *Jealousy!* You talk as if I might still love you!"

With a little cry, Joan sank down upon the bed, and she did not turn when she heard her husband slam the door of his own room. Her white hands clutched at the covers, clutched and unclutched at them . . . and finally her tired body drifted into sleep.

In his own room, Gene made preparations to go to the club. Cable

(turn over)

could see to most of it.

For a week or two he was the old Gene Stoddard. He visited the old strange haunts—that is, all except the dive wherein he'd saved Joan Havelock from suicide. That would have brought too many poignant memories. But, using his club as a central point, the old Gene cut a wide swath. And his friends grinned and said, "I told you so!" They could guess what had happened.

As for Gene, he kept finding it hard to believe. Yet it was plain enough. Joan was no good. Her beauty was a wanton's beauty and it was all that she had. She used it... a brilliant woman would use her brains—upon any man at all! She'd been low when he'd found her, but given the chance to begin again, she'd started it all over. She'd go through the gamut again, eventually find herself in a dive like "The Red Dance,"... the point of suicide. Maybe nobody would be fool enough to save her this time. Well, Gene told himself, he didn't give a damn.

But he did give a damn. The memory of Joan Havelock tortured him night and day. He remembered her that night under the shower, and in countless situations since that marriage night. Every woman with whom he tried to forget, made him remember Joan. Not because she was at all like Joan, but

because her very imperfections made him want his wife back again.

He was almost ready to go back to her, his desire for Joan had almost made him forget everything, when something happened to remind him. Driving down the avenue in his car he was passed by a taxi in which he was certain he'd recognized her. Some curious impulse prompted him to follow her. He switched the car about and began the pursuit.

The taxi drew up before a tall, narrow apartment and Joan alighted to the curb. Gene nosed his roadster near the taxi, jumped out and confronted her.

"Gene!" she seemed startled, not quite glad to see him.



"Joan—I—I want to talk to you . . ."

"But I thought you were through with me, Gene . . . and I want to tell you, I'm leaving the house tomorrow. I—I couldn't think of staying, of course."

"But I want you to stay, Joan. I want to come back. All I ask is that you make some sort of explanation for—for your actions that day."

"I've told you that I can't . . . and I have to go now, dear."

"Go?"

"Yes." She nodded toward the apartment. "I'm late now."

Gene wondered what sort of an appointment she might have inside. His face hardened. "Then you don't wish to explain anything?"

"I—I can't. I've told you that."

"And this appointment, I suppose that's none of my business either."

Joan smiled bitterly. "Well, is it? You left me,—said you'd had enough."

A sudden rage swept through him. "Yes, and by God I had, too!" With that he turned on his heel and got into the roadster. As he sat there he watched Joan disappear into the apartment building.

Somehow a dim jealousy crept over him. There was no doubt of it; Joan *had* captured him. He was hers no matter what she did. Why couldn't he keep her? Why couldn't he get at the bottom of this thing? She had said she couldn't tell him. Did that mean someone had some power over her, or did it mean that she couldn't control herself? He hoped it meant the former. He could cope with that. And, by the lord Harry, he would, too!

Suiting the action to the thought, he drove his car to the next block

and parked it beyond the sight of the apartment building. He walked back, keeping close to the buildings, and entered the apartment. Once inside he was at a loss to know what to do. What room? His eyes scanned the names on the cards: Dickinson, Hilliard, Simons—*Dr. Harry Simons!* That was the name old Cable had given him for "one of the gentlemen who came to see madame."

Gene got the number and dashed up the stairway. The apartment was at the rear, and the door, naturally, was closed. He listened but there was only an ominous and suggestive quiet. He looked at the window at the end of the hall. It jutted over a narrow ledge. Should he try it? The outlook was on a deserted alley and the chances of detection were small. Quietly he opened the sash and slid out onto the ledge. It was easier than he thought. The indented brickwork gave his hands ample hold. One more step. He peered cautiously through the window.

The scene which confronted him was not unlike the one he had surprised when the rain had spoiled his golf that certain afternoon. There was Joan, a clinging, revealing robe around her flawless figure. She stood before a long mirror and seemed to be arranging her hair. Then she sauntered to the other side of the room out of Gene Stoddard's sight.

He was about to crash into the frame of the window, to confront her once more, when he was startled by the entrance into the room of the same man he'd seen that day. Dr. Simons, obviously up to duties that were not altogether professional. He passed from view, and at length reappeared. In his hand was the robe Joan had worn! He threw it care-

lessly over a chair and returned to the other side of the room, invisible to the trembling Stoddard on the ledge outside.

For a full five minutes Stoaddard clung there in a sort of maddened daze. And finally he pulled himself together, re-entered the window and walked slowly down the hallway.

For the next few days he shadowed Joan's every move. She went again to Dr. Simon's; she entered an apartment in another district; and twice visited a house near to Stoddard's own. He did not

He suspected that Joan was throttled by something bigger than herself, that there was in her blood some morbid strain that made her not the mistress of her own soul. Perhaps that was why she'd tried suicide that night in Toni Valducci's place. If that were so, then she needed to be saved from herself. And how he wanted her, needed her!



Ceaselessly watching her, keeping track of her movements both from his own efforts and those of a detective, Stoddard at length dis-

look up the names of the owners of these places. Somehow he did not want to know; somehow he was afraid to know. One thing he did know, it must be that this Simons was the biggest factor in Joan's life. Almost mad with jealousy and bitterness, he resolved to know.

covered another intended visit to the Simon's apartment. He stood in an entrance way across the street, waiting. His heart leaped as a taxi drew to the curb across the street and deposited his wife on the walk. He watched her lithe figure into the apartment, and, after an appreciable length of time, followed her.

This time he went unerringly to Dr. Simons' apartment. He discreetly rang the bell. It was answered by a blank looking Philippine boy who stated flatly that the doctor was not in the city. He would not be back until the end of the week.

Stoddard shoved a foot into the doorway. "Even so," he said, "I think I'll wait." The astonished Philippine remonstrated, seemed ready to cry out, but Gene stuck his hand in his pocket with a significant gesture. There was no sound from the frightened servant. Without a moment's hesitation Stoddard strode into the room where he knew he would find Joan. He was not disappointed.

She had removed the suit of her coat, was unclasping the throat of her sheer waist, when he entered. She turned on him with a little cry.

"One more sound and I'll let you have what you wanted at Valducci's that night I found you . . . I want to see the rest of this."

Frantically she looked toward the door at her back. And even as she looked the tall dark Dr. Simons came into the room. He saw Stoddard and stopped dead still. He turned to Joan. "Who is this?

"My—my husband . . ."

Gene's lip curled. "Yes, isn't it unfortunate? Now, perhaps you'd like to explain these rather—unusual —ah—*tete-a-tetes*. Perhaps it would be better for you if you did."

Simons shrugged. "I think perhaps your wife could tell you better than I."

Joan looked at the doctor as if to obtain his permission. Again Simons shrugged, as if to say, "What can you do? He has found us."

"Gene, it isn't—it isn't what you think at all. You see, Dr. Simons saved my life—"

Stoddard grunted. "So you pulled

the suicide stunt on him, too, eh?"

"Just a minute, Mr. Stoddard," Simons interposed. "I'll explain it. And I ask that you allow me the floor until I'm finished . . ." He paused, lit a cigarette with maddening ease.

"Before you met your wife she—she was in rather straitened circumstances you will remember. I was doing some work for the city clinic. She came there with a very nasty case of *grippe*, almost pneumonia. I noticed that just above her left breast was a black pigmented mole that would be the beginning of cancer. My colleagues and I had been working on a cure for cancer. We had this remedy perfected to the point where it was ready to try. The result might mean cure—and it might mean death. Miss Havelock—who is now your wife—made an agreement with us. A legal contract was drawn; we were to give her five thousand, to experiment upon that mole which would, eventually, take her life—"

"You—you actually performed the operation when you didn't know how it might turn out!"

The doctor raised a hand. "It has turned out extremely well. For a time it looked very doubtful. It was then that she felt the need of a more painless death—at Valducci's, where you found her."

"I don't believe it, Simons. All this damned secrecy."

"That was a part of the contract, Mr. Stoddard. This is a great discovery. I wanted no publicity as yet. When you were married she pleaded with me to tell you. But I know how husbands feel. I asked her not to, until the whole thing was certain. Now, I believe, it is. I—ah—, as I see, the disrobing was altogether necessary. Cancer, once gained ground, spreads to any part of the body. I had to be sure that



my method had cured, and not merely shunted the symptoms to another part."

Stoddard turned to Joan. "These other men at the house that day, and those other visits that you made—"

"Those 'other men' were my colleagues," Simons broke in. "The other visits were no doubt to friends of hers. Innocent visits. Your mind was naturally suspicious, Stoddard. I can appreciate your feelings, and I am sorry."

Gene's arms dropped. "I guess—I guess it is I who should be sorry." He turned to Joan. "Oh, Joan . . . your going through all this . . . and I've treated you so badly when I should have trusted you."

Dr. Simons smiled and left the room . . .

"Dearest:

We must not meet again. It is too dangerous. We are fortunate if he keeps on believing my preposterous story. Only your full attention to his love can make him keep on believing . . . And, as a physician, I advise you to rein in that pagan nature of yours. These are things I could never find the courage to advise you as a lover. As a physician I find it possible.

Harry Simons."

That night Gene could detect no black pigmented mole.

"Oh, Dr. Simons quite removed it, dear. There's not even a scar."

"Funny, I don't remember having seen it there before, either."

Joan laughed. "I seemed so perfect to you, Gene. You couldn't find even one flaw in me . . . Kiss me, darling."

She was Helen. She was Ishtar. She was a woman too beautiful to live. He took her in his arms, glad that she was black again.

And the next day Dr. Simons, who had never taken a cancer case in his life, sat down and wrote a short note to a Wanton Woman.

(Continued from page 15)

the floor beneath us! I looked down - WE WERE OVER A MIRROR!!

"You're certainly anxious to get material for your new book, aren't you?" I asked dryly. He flushed deeply and led me away, but, like the little prairie flower, he, too, was growing wilder every hour, so he made no attempt at an apology but only said "I don't think I've been holding you- quite right," and then he boldly proceeded to draw me closer to him. I would have protested-I certainly would have-if, unfortunately, I hadn't experienced a terrible dizzy faintness just when he had me closest. I could only cling and hope for the best.

During the last dance all the lights were extinguished. A powerful spotlight thrown on the revolving crystal chandelier sent a million patches of gay vari-colored light racing through the scented gloom, over walls, ceiling, floor and dancers. Arthur's clasp tightened slowly, deliberately until I hardly knew where my body ended and his began. A delicious, sensuous languor crept over me and my head fell limply back against his supporting arm. In the dimness I could see his eyes flashing, burning down into mine. His fine, rather grim young mouth relaxed and yearned toward my uplifted one. I saw that his was trembling in a mad desire for long, exciting kisses, and my own lips quivered in response, actually aching for the pain of a pleasure denied. He murmured softly, hoarsely, "You-darling..." and bent down-DAMN! The lights went on and now I will never know what might have happened. But I can guess.

He couldn't take me home because a committee of fellow-novelists were dragging him on to a party afterward, but when I was ready to leave he told me, thoughtfully, that he believed he needed more dancing instruction before he could begin his new book.

"I haven't collected quite enough - data," he said gravely. I understood and agreed that he might call here to-night. Must dash uptown for another new dress. Alas, that a girl in the same old gown doesn't look as sweet! There is a perfect dream of a dress in the Paris Shoppe window this week. It's one of those new swathed-hip effects, and when you walk a certain way-Sing Hallelulah! (they need more than a hand-out to revive 'em again!)

MONDAY
11
MARCH

1929

THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE: And wotta night it was! Art called quite early - before I was ready, in fact - and

(turn to page 48)

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| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 11 |
| 6 | 12 |
| 13 | |

MY FAVORITE AUTHOR IS _____ Write Name _____

Our Authors



(Continued from page 45)

when I did finally come downstairs he jumped up, took both of my hands and then just stood there, staring at me, his eyes lingering with particular admiration upon the new Nile-green gown.

"A thing of brevity is a joy forever," he quoted solemnly. Then we both laughed and he started the Victrola and caught me impetuously in his arms. I began to sing with the music:

"Last time we went shopping, everything was C.O.D.
C.O.D.'s the way you're gonna get love from me!"

But before I'd finished the verse he suddenly stopped dancing and groaned: "Oh, I can't stand this any longer! I MUST kiss you!" (The audacity of the man!)

Seeing that the lady did not protest too much, he pulled my head back against his shoulder and kissed me wildly, almost brutally. It was sadly apparent that he knew little of the fine art - it IS an art, and a fine one, too - of osculation. And equally plain that he would make an apt and willing pupil. He certainly had plenty of ambition and perseverance, but he didn't quite know what to do with it all. So, after a lot of hectic lovin' that didn't get anywhere if you know what I mean, I got sort of exasperated and said, aptly illustrating my words: "Don't do this - and - that. Do THUS - and - SO!" (After all, anything that's worth doing is worth doing well.)

He seemed to take a genuine interest in my lessons and insisted upon practicing them over and over. At last I was moved to protest. He looked aggrieved and reminded me, in a hurt tone, that ALL is fair in love and war. What could I do? That happens to be a favorite proverb of mine, and, really a girl can't go against her favorite proverb. However, before I could come to a decision, one of my customary dizzy spells came over me. I closed my eyes and fell limply against Arthur. He picked me up in his arms - and because of this odd faintness I can't remember just what happened after that, but I seem to recall, sort of vaguely, that it wasn't exactly - unpleasant.

A long time afterward, the famous author of "Ten Evils of Dancing" rose from the divan - how should I know how he got there? - and began to adjust his tie. He sighed blissfully. Then very dutifully he inquired: "When do we invite the neighbors to scatter rice, sweetheart?"

"We don't," I replied languidly. "I am not going to marry you and make an honest man of you, little innocent. This is a case of Art for Art's sake, as it were, darling. Marriage is not for little Eve. She has discovered the bitter truth, namely, that wedded bliss is like an ancient egg - it LOOKS better than it is."

"Well, you know what the Scriptures say," he said solemnly, "'Tis not good for man to live alone - but 'tis cheaper." And then he leaned down and put his lips hard and close against mine for a long, rapturous moment. When at last he stood up again he said, enthusiastically: "I'm



going to write a perfect wow of a book, now — going to call it "On With The Dance!"

At this point memory smote me — also conscience. "I've got to tell you, Arthur," I whispered. "Your publishers didn't send me last night at all!"

He looked amused. "Oh, I knew that. You see, I have no publishers, so to speak. I paid for the printing of my book myself."

Which makes me believe that the only woman who ever got ahead of a man was Salome.

I have been asked to help with a charity bazaar next month. Truly there is no rest for the wicked, but then, as some knowing soul put it, the good don't have much fun, either. But this bazaar thing looks sort of interesting. I'm to sell kisses. Must study up on salesmanship this week, for I am firmly determined that all my customers shall be satisfied ones.



JUNE NIGHT

Moonbeams and star gleams—
Night birds calling low.
Gladness and sadness,
World with June aglow;
Rhythm of a summer sea
Murmuring below.

Fragrant and vagrant
Pagan trade winds blow,
Drifting and lifting,
Whisp'ring as they go—
Harbingers of romance land
Where fair blossoms blow.

You loved and I loved,
Far from madding strife—
Burning and yearning,
Sweet, your kiss was life!
Please don't tell your husband, dear—
I won't tell my wife!

—*Norman H. Girk*

(Continued from page 12)

"Kiss me, Jerry—"

* * * * *

Suddenly there was a sharp knock at the door. Hilda and Jerry jumped up as if someone had suddenly jammed a pin in them. Who—what—the—

A n o t h e r
knock...

"Who's
there?" de—

ly, "we've
got to
frame him
—that's all
—w e ' l l
blackmail
t h e o l d



manded Hilda, quickly wrapping Jerry's coat around her.

"It's your Hinky Dinky—" said a gruff voice," and he's mad as hell . . . and DRUNK AS HELL. L-e-t m-e i-n, or I'll smash through this damned—"

Hilda began to think fast. There was a dull thud as the body of J. Mortimer Wilks bore its elephantine weight against the mahogany door.

"Jerry," whispered Hilda excited-

octopus—then we can get married—we'll shake him down for plenty. Here, hide in the closet . . . when I cough twice, break out and threaten to expose him—his wife would kill him if she knew—quick, Jerry—"

Hilda's instructions were just in time. In another instant there was a terrific crash, as the door gave way, and the rumpled form of J. Mortimer Wilks dropped on the floor. He was soon to his feet, and staggered to Hilda.

(turn over)

"What do you mean—? Give me a kiss or I'll take back that promise—"

He approached Hilda. Putting his arms around her, he attempted to force a kiss on her quivering lips. In the struggle that followed, the coat she was wear-

Jerry produced a bottle of champagne.

"Let's do a little first class drinking!" he suggested, boyishly. "First,"



ing fell to the floor . . . Jerry heard two coughs, and bounded out of the closet!

* * * * *

When the boat left New York Harbor for Paris the next day there were two on board who couldn't wait until they could leave the deck and cuddle up in their stateroom.

As soon as the last farewells had been waved . . . the last good-byes hollered, Jerry and Hilda went to their room and locked the door.

"Oh, precious," breathed Hilda. "Just think, that we'll be all alone—just for each other—"

he added with a wink.

"Wasn't it slick the way we foxxed old foxey grandpa?" gurgled Hilda. "I'll bet the old cow doesn't know yet how much he made out the check for—"

"Wasn't it \$100,000?" asked Jerry.

Hilda laughed.

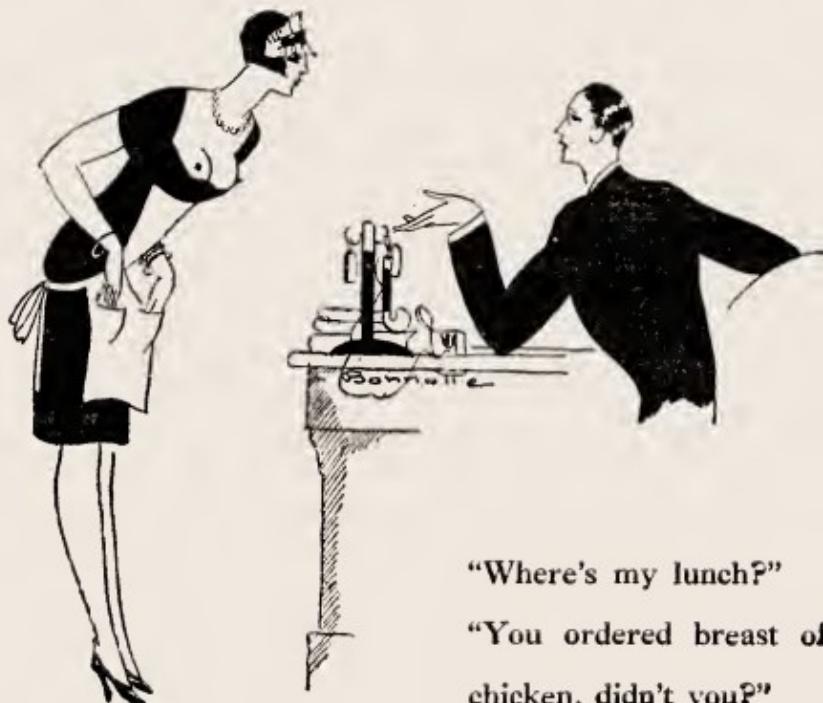
"\$100,000 me eye!

"He added an extra cipher for good measure!"

And so, children, you have the story of Hilda and Jerry. The cool blonde who looked like a cool million—and got it. And the passionate young reporter who went for a story and got—well, if you don't know, we'll never tell!



THE
DEVIL'S
PLAY
THINGS



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She: "Why are those lobsters red?"
He: "If you were in that window without any clothes on—you'd be red too!"

Plays with 'Sad' endings usually come to *Grief!*

Kind Old Lady: "Why are you here my good man?"

Convict: "Because of my belief."

Kind Old Lady: "How is it possible to be here because you believed something?"

Convict: "Well—I believed the cop—bad his back turned!"

The Corset evidently was Not here to Stay.

Percy: "Are you a letter man?"

Reggie: "Even if she wants to, I don't letter."

Bessie: "Did you have a blind date last night?"

Tessie: "Not only blind—Paralyzed!"

He (politely): Won't you take your things off and stay a while?

She: Say, what do you think I am?

Sunday School Teacher: Now children, you must never do anything in private that you wouldn't do in public.

Sammy: Hurray! No baths!



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IF
You Wanna
Make Wise Cracks

G
E
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Divorced Newlyweds
(Continued from page 28)

my life I've been blinded by it. But now I can see. You've made me. Oh, Rus—don't look at me like that! I love you, dear sweet idiot!"

"Not—after what I've done!"

"Because of what you've done! It was the only way you could possibly have shown me that—that I don't want to live without you." Her voice softened to a tender croon. "Rus," she said, her lashes winking back tears, "are you as utterly devastating —when you're sober?"

Without more invitation he showed her that he was.



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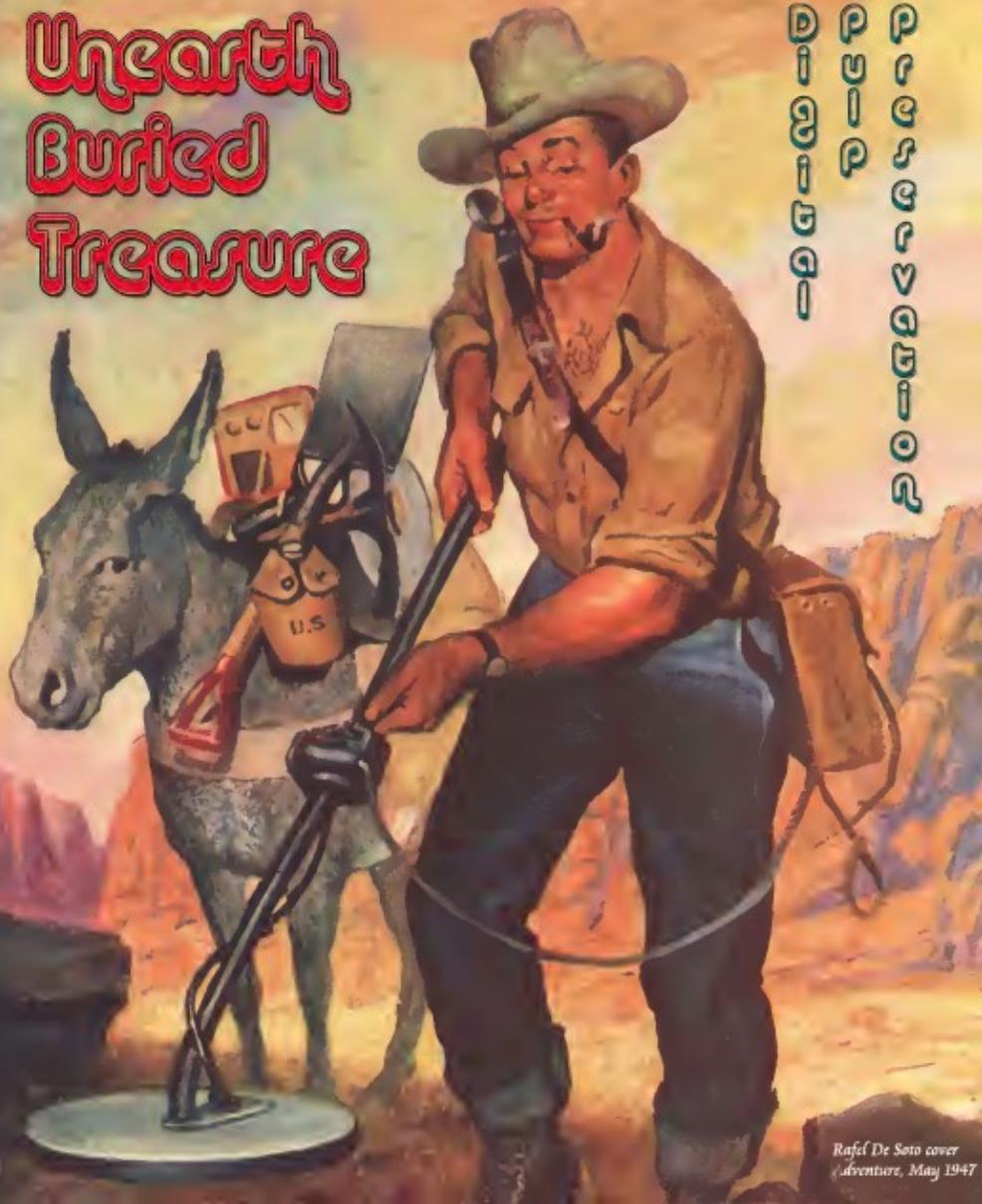
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